

Egypt inaugurates pipeline

CAIRO, Dec. 15 (AFP). — The 320 kms Suez-Alexandria pipeline destined to carry an eventual 120 million tons of oil a year was inaugurated today in the presence of Egyptian Prime Minister Mamdouh Salem. Built by a group of Italian engineering firms, the pipeline was financed to the tune of \$348 million by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait, with Egypt putting up half the capital. When in full operation, the pipeline will earn Egypt an estimated \$150 million a year.

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Curfews, strike, violence overtake West Bank towns

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Dec. 15 (Agencies). — A secondary school student was wounded today as most of the occupied West Bank answered a general strike call in the second week of anti-Israeli protests in the region.

The student, Mr. Tahsin Nasser, 15, was the first person wounded in the recent disturbances. He received a slight foot wound when police fired into the air to disperse young demonstrators near Beit A, north of Jerusalem, who were throwing rocks from behind stone barricades.

Except in Jericho and Eastern Jerusalem, most schools, shops and offices were closed on the West Bank and public transport was at a standstill in protest against the decision to extend the value-added tax to the West Bank and other Israeli moves.

Violence was reported in Ramallah and near Qalandia refugee camp to the south. Israeli troops moved in force into Ramallah, where they used tear gas and fired warning shots to disperse young demonstrators. Several arrests were reported.

Ramallah, Qalandia and central Nablus were under curfew in the morning. While department stores were closed in Gaza, small shops remained open.

Later, Israeli authorities lifted their curfew on the town of Ramallah and on Qalandia.

The curfew, however, remained in force in Nablus where, as with the rest of the West Bank, shops remained closed and transport services were paralysed.

BADRAN, SHARAF HOLD KUWAIT, JEDDAH TALKS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

AMMAN (Agencies). — Prime Minister Mudar Badran and Chief of the Royal Cabinet Sharif Abdul Hamid Sharaf returned here Wednesday evening after a flying visit to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Badran and Sharif Sharaf held talks with Crown Prince Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah of Kuwait on bilateral relations Wednesday morning.

Following that, the two Jordanian officials left to Jeddah where talks were held Wednesday afternoon with Crown Prince Fahd Ibn Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia.

The Jeddah talks dealt with bilateral relations and the present Arab situation.



TO CONFERENCE — The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifeh Ibn Hamad Al Thani (right), arrives at Doha's Gulf Hotel to open the conference of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Wednesday. With him is OPEC's retiring Chairman, Indonesia's Oil Minister Dr. Mohammad Sadli. (AP wirephoto).

Despite Saudi wish to maintain freeze OPEC consensus: moderate increase

DOHA, Dec. 15 (R). — OPEC oil ministers, after opening talks here today, said they were confident they will agree to raise oil prices in the new year in spite of Saudi Arabia's declared wish to see them remain frozen for another six months. The oil ministers of Libya, Venezuela and Iraq said after the first conference session of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that they thought there would be an oil price increase.

Saudi Arabia's Sheikh Ahmad Zaki Yamani said here last night he would try to convince fellow ministers in the 13-member organisation that the world economy had not recovered well enough to support a new oil price increase.

He said prices ought to stay at the level fixed by OPEC 15 months ago, i.e. \$11.51 for a standard barrel of crude.

Libyan Oil Minister Ezzedin Al Mabruk said today he was not surprised by Sheikh Yamani's comments.

"We are accustomed to such statements," he said, in an apparent reference to previous OPEC price conferences in which Sheikh

Yamani adopted extreme positions at the start of negotiations.

Iraqi Oil Minister Tayeh Abdul Karim, who said yesterday he would like to see a rise of 25 per cent in the price of a standard barrel of crude oil, said today the majority of OPEC states were in favour of a price increase "at least as high as the rate of inflation."

He was believed to be referring to an OPEC report which one minister said yesterday estimated the relative loss of purchasing power by OPEC states at 26.9 per cent since oil prices went up 10 per cent in October 1975.

Commenting on Sheikh Yamani's statement, Mr. Abdul Karim said it was for the majority to decide whether a price rise was in order "and not for one or two states."

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, successfully defeated an attempt by the majority to raise oil prices at an OPEC conference in Indonesia last May. But its stand this time appears to be less rigid, with Sheikh Yamani saying his country was willing to alter its position after talks with other oil ministers here although it felt prices should not be raised.

Venezuelan Oil Minister Valentin Hernandez said today the oil price would increase but the rise would be moderate.

He said there was an "unhealthy" rise of six per cent in the open market above the official oil price and that this at least should be absorbed. A price increase of five or six per cent at the very least was necessary, he added.

The OPEC conference was opened by the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifeh Ibn Hamad Al Thani, who said there was a need for a price increase now to compensate the oil exporters for the loss of purchasing power.

He said a price rise was also necessary to enable the oil exporters to honour a commitment to help poor developing nations to continue their own economic development, and to maintain the exporters' financial aid to industrialised states with balance-of-payments problems.

"We are being compelled towards an oil price increase to cover only a small fraction of our losses resulting from a huge depreciation in the real value (of oil exports)," he added.

Iran's chief delegate Jamshid Amouzegar said earlier today that his country wanted to strike a balance between the highest and lowest price increases sought by other members.

"Iran's position is for moderation, which will be the key word of the conference," he added.

The morning plenary session of the conference was taken up by procedural matters, according to retiring OPEC Chairman Mohammad Sadli, the Oil Minister of Indonesia.

Dr. Sadli, who handed over the chairmanship today to the Qatari Oil Minister, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ibn Khalifeh Al Thani, said the ministers approved the conference agenda and priorities for discussion.

They held a closed session this afternoon at the closely-guarded conference centre overlooking the Gulf.

Among other issues they discussed were differences in the prices of different kinds of crude oil and a proposal for coordinating oil production among the member states in a way which would avoid a surplus of oil in the world market, according to conference sources.

In Algiers, Iraqi Vice President Saddam Hussein said today Iraq and Algeria agreed on the need for an increase in oil prices. "We are in favour of a just rise in oil prices in order to guarantee our rights and the future of our people," Mr. Hussein said before leaving Algiers after a 24-hour visit during which he had four hours of talks with Algerian President Houari Boumedienne.

Lebanon eyes aid for reconstruction

BEIRUT, Dec. 15 (R). — Prime Minister Selim Al Hoss will begin visits to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait on Friday in quest of oil money to help Lebanon's reconstruction after 19 ruinous months of civil war.

A well-informed source said today that the truce committee will give the rival factions one week to hand over their heavy armaments. This was decided yesterday in the committee's first meeting with President Sarkis.

The committee hopes that the disarmament programme will be completed by the end of the month, the source said.

In west Beirut armed men were holding the offices of three pro-Iraqi newspapers tonight after occupying them in the afternoon.

Initial reports attributed the incursion on the peace-keeping force of the Arab League. But employees of the dailies Al Muharrer and Beyrouth and the weekly Al Destour said later they were occupied by armed elements that were not directly under the command of the Arab League force.

Although the truce was a month old today, the parties to the Lebanese conflict are still reluctant to comply with a plan to assemble heavy arms -- from machine guns to tanks -- in arsenals to be supervised by the 30,000-man peace force.



SCENE OF EXPLOSION — The customs department at Baghdad Airport following the explosion there Tuesday evening of a bomb placed in a suitcase. (AP wirephoto).

9 dead in explosion at Baghdad Airport

PARIS, Dec. 15 (Agencies). — Nine people are thought to have died and about 40 injured in yesterday's explosion at Baghdad Airport, airline passengers arriving here today from the Iraqi capital said.

A French businessman said the arrivals lounge in the air terminal was "completely destroyed. Customs and police formalities were carried out outside the air terminal."

Baghdad Radio today said two Iraqis and a Saudi were killed and 10 people were injured when a time bomb in a suitcase unloaded from an Egyptian plane arriving from Damascus went off at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday.

A young woman arriving here aboard an Air France flight tonight said Iraqi officials told hotel visitors in Baghdad that a plane had crashed on a runway, forcing the airport to close for several hours.

In London, a businessman said on arrival from Baghdad today that he had been told "that seven people had been killed and over a hundred were in hospital."

Mr. Ken Carlless of Shrewsbury, west England, said: "As we boarded our flight to London we saw the front of the terminal had been torn off. The whole building was wrecked."

Another businessman, who refused to give his name, confirmed the Iraqi radio statement that the explosion occurred in the customs hall.

Radio Baghdad said experts thought the time bomb consisted of seven kgs. of explosives wired to a clock.

The Iraqi News Agency said today that investigators in Baghdad were certain the suitcase was put aboard the plane by "the Syrian authorities at Damascus Airport," where several passengers boarded the aircraft.

The agency said that Egyptians, Syrians, Palestinians, Lebanese, Japanese, West Germans and Greeks were among the injured.

(British Airways said many of the injured were reported to be Moslem pilgrims waiting in the terminal building for departing flights.)

In Tehran, the newspaper Etefak quoted an Iranian eyewitness as saying Iraqi security men who rushed to the customs hall after the explosion had difficulty calming terror-stricken passengers fleeing from the Baghdad terminal.

"Passengers carrying hand luggage ran screaming everywhere looking for an exit and safety," the Iranian said after arriving in Tehran from Baghdad.

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The price of oil - III

Whether OPEC raises the price of a barrel of oil by 10 per cent or 25 per cent is not in itself the most important question at the price meeting in Doha this week.

On the purely material economic level, a barrel of oil is worth much more than the \$11.51 it has sold for over the past 15 months. If compared to the total societal and financial costs of alternate energy sources -- fossil fuels and others -- a barrel of oil would fetch a price as high as \$25. If weighed only against the rising demand for oil in the West, it could sell for more. If weighed against its real value in the process of maintaining the consumer-industrial societies of the Western world, it could sell for even more. But the value of oil transcends the considerations of the purely material level.

The international oil sector is the tip of the iceberg that is the determination of the developing states to seek an international economic order with more fairness, and balanced gains. This order is being brought about slowly and sometimes with great confusion, but it will happen because the global economy has undergone a fundamental inversion since 1973 whose full meanings are still being explored and accepted. This inversion is dramatised by the manner in which the OPEC states have taken control of their oil industries, and oil pricing and production policies. The same thing will have to happen, over time, in all the world's commodity markets. It is happening slowly in the phosphate market right now, as the major phosphate rock producers, including Jordan, have agreed to form an association to control production and price levels.

In the oil sector, the OPEC states are now putting this new order into practice. By determining how much oil they produce, and how much they sell it for, they are making the Western states -- and the whole world -- realise the fact that a new international economic order will mean a real transfer of wealth and capital from the industrialised states to the developing states. This is the meaning of the new system that the developing world wants to work out, and that the industrial Western states are trying to ward off for as long as they can.

The Western states that are so vehement now in their warnings about the destructive implications of another oil price rise showed that their economies are deep and wide enough to absorb the five-fold increase in oil prices that has been registered since 1973, and that their financial institutions are similarly flexible and substantial enough to handle the immense amounts of cash revenues that the oil producers have not been able to invest or spend right away. In other words, the lessons since 1973 point out the basic strengths of the Western economies, and the clear limitations of the OPEC economies. The Western complainers today would have us believe otherwise. If they were wrong in 1973, why should we think they will be right today?

The Western states today ask for more and more OPEC oil, and they also ask for lower and lower prices. Even as the oil price freeze of the past 15 months has actually reduced the real value of OPEC reserves and revenues, the Western nations have the astounding gall to say that no oil price rise is justified. In other words, the West wants more oil, at a cheaper price and without any strings attached or any threats of a politically inspired disruption of supplies, such as another Arab oil embargo.

It seems to be the thinking in the West that this kind of system is appropriate for the OPEC states, but is not appropriate for the domestic economies or the international trade sectors of the West. Would, for example, the Americans apply this sort of economic thinking to the process that just took place in the professional U.S. baseball leagues, where single athletes placed themselves up for free-market bidding and came out with individual contracts worth more than \$1 million a year? Would the British apply it to pricing their automobiles? Would the French or the Germans apply it to pricing the nuclear power plants they sell to developing states? None of them would. But why then do they ask the OPEC states to apply such a system to the international oil market?

The importance of the Doha meeting this week is that it is the application of economic power and responsibility as newly wielded by the commodity-producing countries of the Third World. In the oil sector at least, the cards are on the table; the talking is over and the acid test is now in progress. OPEC wants to raise the price of its oil because, for various reasons, the price of its oil in relation to international economic variables is unfairly low, and the OPEC states are not receiving just compensation for the non-renewable commodity they are producing in ever greater amounts to meet the avaricious, cavernous demands of the West. But how does the West respond to this new way to play the international trade game? It yells and screams, it complains, it threatens, it cajoles, it does everything but agree to play by the new rules. It wants to apply the old rules of getting lots of oil at cheap prices. It wants to postpone the north-south dialogue at Paris because that dialogue is getting to the point where cards have to be placed on the table there, too. In other words, when the chips are down, the West wants to stop playing this new game and go back to the old one.

The important thing at Doha this week is to make it clear that the old game is over. How that point is made is up to the OPEC ministers to decide. The crucial thing is that it be made loud and clear, once and for all.

It may turn out that the price of oil is the cost of justice.

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King Hussein, Queen Alya patronise Alia ceremonies



His Majesty King Hussein inspects Alia's new Boeing 747 jumbo jet plane Wednesday. (JNA photo).

AMMAN (JNA). — A Boeing 747 airliner landed at Amman airport today, the first of two jumbos purchased by Alia, the Royal Jordanian Airline.

His Majesty King Hussein and Her Majesty Queen Alya patronised the special ceremony held by Alia at the Royal Lounge on the

occasion of the arrival of the aircraft and on the 13th anniversary of the establishment of the airline.

Present at the ceremony were H.R.H. Crown Prince Hassan, H.R.H. Princess Alia and H.R.H. Princess Basma.

After inspecting the jumbo jet, the King distributed recognition

prizes to Alia's ideal employees and to those who spent ten years in service.

Stewards and stewardesses then put on a show in front of the King and the Queen displaying the new uniform adopted by Alia.

Alia Chairman and President, Ali Ghandour, expressed appreciation and gratitude to King Hussein for his continued backing and support which rendered Alia an international air carrier linking Jordan with the world.

Jordan, Bulgaria start educational talks

AMMAN (JNA). — Members of the Bulgarian educational team expressed their country's willingness to increase the number of scholarships and university seats allotted to Jordanian students at Bulgarian universities, in a meeting they held here at the Ministry of Education with top ministry officials, Wednesday.

The Bulgarian delegation said that this increase in educational aid to Jordan should take place within the framework of the cultural cooperation agreement concluded between the two countries in 1974 and not on an individual basis.

The Bulgarian delegation arrived here Tuesday on a five-day visit for talks with Ministry of Education officials on the equation of diplomas between the two countries. An executive protocol on the subject is expected to be signed

by the two parties Thursday morning. The executive protocol was initiated by Jordan and Bulgaria during the visit to Bulgaria in May of a Jordanian educational team headed by the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Mr. Hikmat Saket.

Delegation members were received by the Minister of Education Dr. Abdul Salam Majali on Wednesday and visited afterwards the University of Jordan and the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), where they were briefed on the two institutions present activities and future projects.

Amman will get Talal Dam water

AMMAN (JNA). — A contract was signed Wednesday at Amman Municipality for conducting studies, drawing up designs and supervising a project for supplying the capital with water from King Talal Dam.

The contract worth JD 177,000 provides for drawing up blueprints and specifications for international bidders to be invited to carry out the project.

The Mayor of Amman Ma'n Abu Nuwwar said that the JD 8-10 million project would alleviate the water shortage crisis in Amman and other towns located between the dam and the capital city.

National Notes

● AMMAN. — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs Ibrahim Ayyoub Wednesday received the ambassador of the Republic of China.

● AMMAN. — The Cabinet has appointed Mr. Zouqan Al Hindawi and Mr. Saieh Al Shara' as ambassadors to Egypt and North Yemen respectively.

● AMMAN. — Omani Director General of Culture Najib Al Zubaid Wednesday arrived here to participate in the preliminary meeting for the conference of the Arab ministers of culture.

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SYRIAN BAAATH DELEGATION ENDS VISIT

AMMAN (JNA). — The Syrian Baath Party delegation headed by Dr. Rifat Assad, member of the Baath Party Regional Leadership and commander of the Defence Columns in the Syrian Armed Forces, left for Damascus after a three-day visit here.

During its stay the delegation met with His Majesty King Hussein and high ranking officials within the framework of integration efforts between the Jordan and Syria.

The delegation was seen off at Al Ramtha border town, by Minister of Interior, Sulaiman Arar, Jordanian officials and the Syrian ambassador in Amman.

Hassan receives U.S. representative

AMMAN (JNA). — His Highness Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday afternoon received U.S. representative Stephen Solarz (Dem., New York), and the American chargé d'affaires in Amman.

Earlier in the morning, the prince was received by Minister of Information, Adnan Aba Odeh, who briefed him on the present status of peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Solarz is currently on a visit to Jordan during which he will meet with a number of high ranking officials.

Jordan, W. Germany sign memoranda

AMMAN (JNA). — Cooperation memoranda covering technical aid to the Aqaba Port Authority was exchanged with West Germany Tuesday.

The memoranda extend the services of the West German experts seconded to the authority to another year and nominate another expert to help in setting up a principal maintenance workshop at the authority.

The West German government will also finance the purchase of spare parts and other necessary port equipment in addition to providing the port authority with some training scholarships for its employees.

The memoranda were signed here at the Ministry of Transport by the Transport Minister, Mr. Ali Subeihat and by the West German Ambassador to Jordan, Dr. Horst Schmidt-Dorieden.

3 new banks to open here

AMMAN (JNA). — The Central Bank's board of administration, Wednesday approved in principle, the opening of two new banks, the Jordan-Gulf Bank with a capital of JD 5 million and the Petra Bank, with a capital of JD 3 million.

With these two new banks which will have their headquarters here, the number of Jordanian, Arab and foreign banks operating in the kingdom will reach a total of 15.

Prior to these two authorisations, the board had approved the opening of another bank under the name of the Jordanian-Kuwait Bank with a capital of JD 5 million.

ARAB PRESS COMMENTARY

On the anti-Israeli 24-hour general strike in the West Bank and Gaza Wednesday, Al Ra'i says that after many days of demonstrations and clashes with the forces of occupation, Wednesday's general strike adds "another ring to the golden chain of struggle of those who choose to stand fast on their land and confront occupation with their naked fists and their unshakable belief."

The paper says the commotion in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is presently the only indication of life in the body of the Palestinian issue... and the sole focal point of confrontation between the Arab nation and Zionist aggression.

"Although we believe that strikes, demonstrations and street clashes are no real substitute for an all-out Arab struggle, yet the Palestinian people living under the yoke of occupation have no other means with which to fight, and are not to blame if other weapons of struggle are not being put into use.

"The world, Al Ra'i says, now knows the naked facts of occupation only through the stand of the West Bank and Gaza, not through the speeches and statements voiced here and there in Arab capitals...

Under the heading "A new condemnation for Israel", Al Sha'b says that Israel was again denounced when the Foreign Press Association office in Israel decided to sever all relations with the office of the Israeli military spokesman, who arranges the movements of the journalists and supplies them with information.

The reason for the boycott, according to the association's statement, was because of the insistence of the office -- despite repeated protests -- to ban foreign journalists from making an on-the-spot coverage of the news of the popular uprising in the occupied Arab territories.

The Israeli authorities, the paper says, have erected "an armed iron curtain" to prevent journalists from reaching Nablus, Ramallah, Jerusalem and other turbulent West Bank towns to report on the demonstrations and protests against arbitrary Israeli measures. The authorities have insisted on supplying the foreign mass media with false and mutilated handouts instead of giving a true picture of the situation.

"It is a new and no less important condemnation than the previous sentences already passed on Israel's barbaric aggression and racist practices by such high-positioned world organisations as the United Nations General Assembly, the World Health Organisation, the International Red Cross and UNESCO," Al Sha'b states.

Al Baath of Damascus thinks that Premier Rabin's statement to the American Newsweek magazine rejecting the Palestine Liberation Organisation's representation at the proposed Geneva conference is bound to torpedo any possibility of reconvening such a conference. Therefore, the paper adds, the says.

Israeli manoeuvre seems to be an attempt to blast the possibility of the Geneva conference meeting placing upon the Arabs the responsibility of what is called "the obstruction of peace efforts" and using Israel's acceptance of the principle of Geneva -- despite the fact that it doesn't mean any progress towards withdrawal or recognition of Palestinian rights -- as a means of pressure upon the Arabs at international forums.

But these tactics cannot hide or cover Israel's real intentions of refusing to withdraw and avoid ing to recognise the national rights of the Palestinians, Al Baath

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مكذات الامم

But a topic of conversation in Peking

Teng remains out of sight

By Georges Bianic
 (JING, Dec. 15 (AFP). — The disgraced Chinese leader Teng Hsiao-ping is seen less and less but talked about more and more.

Teng Hsiao-ping rose twice to power and was twice dismissed. The former vice premier still in limbo but he casts a long shadow over the Chinese political scene.

In the past few weeks Teng Hsiao-ping has become a principal subject of conversation not only among foreign observers but with Chinese man-in-the-street who do not forget him.

Once again, the 72-year-old Teng Hsiao-ping ("little Teng", as Mao Tse-tung sometimes called him), has become the talk of the town, at a time when the official press has virtually fallen silent about him, after accusing him of "crimes" since the death of the late Premier Chou En-lai.

At the height of his power, after years as party general secretary, Teng Hsiao-ping fell victim to the Red Guards in 1967.

At the time, it was said he had been tossed into the "dustbin of history" forever. He was called "number two capitalist road" in the party after former president Liu Shao-chi.

After acknowledging his "mistakes", he reappeared in the forefront of Chinese politics, becoming vice premier on April 12, 1973. Apparently supported by the late Premier Chou En-lai, he was appointed party vice chairman, then army chief of staff in January 1975.

He appeared to be once again at the height of his glory one year later when he delivered the funeral eulogy for Chou En-lai last January. He then seemed to be Chou En-lai's most likely successor.

One month later, there was a big surprise when Hua Kuo-feng was unexpectedly named acting premier. In April, after a virulent criticism campaign, Teng Hsiao-ping was stripped of all his posts. He was accused of "rightwing deviationism", and once again, of following the "capitalist road".

For the next six months, he was denounced more fiercely than ever for all the "crimes" he was officially said to have committed, especially in the economic sector. He was accused of insisting too strongly on production at the expense of "class struggle".

But on Oct. 7, another dramatic turn of events shook the Chinese political scene. Several days later the world learned that Mao Tse-tung's own widow, Chiang Ching, had been arrested, less than one month after the death of the "Great Helmsman".

She was charged with conspiring with certain other leaders of the so-called "radical" faction of the party, who had twice been responsible for toppling Teng Hsiao-ping. They were Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan, who all owed their political fortunes to their activities during the Cultural Revolution.

The official press switched targets overnight. Those who were considered -- abroad, at least -- as the "hard-core of the permanent revolution in China," were accused of almost the same "crimes" formerly tagged on Teng Hsiao-ping.

The Chinese people have not had time to forget him, and they talk about him quite openly, although until recently his name was mentioned only in official criticism.

He seems to be respected and somewhat admired for his outspoken and tough character, his reputation for authority, his qualities as an organizer, and perhaps even for having systematically refused to "repent" his mistakes and make a self-criticism after his fall in April.

"I am a deaf old man," he reportedly told the students who asked him to confess his crimes during a struggle meeting, a kind of public trial, held shortly after his second dismissal.

In informal conversations with foreign diplomats and journalists, Chinese officials now remind them that the Politburo decision on April 7 did not strip Teng Hsiao-ping of his party membership.

The same officials said privately that Teng Hsiao-ping was not an "enemy of the people", meaning that his problem was not an "antagonistic contradiction", a term the Politburo used when announcing his dismissal.

Without excluding the possibility of Teng's return to the political scene, these officials said that the "Teng Hsiao-ping problem" was not currently a priority, an opinion shared by most diplomats in Peking.

Chairman Hua Kuo-feng now faces the task of consolidating his power after the purge of the "radicals" and their followers throughout China. He also must deal with serious economic problems both in industry, after the July 28 earthquake in Tangshan, and in agriculture, after a year of natural disasters.

Diplomats here believe it would be awkward for Mao's successor to risk bringing up the question of rehabilitating a man who was denounced by everyone, including Chairman Mao, since the beginning of the year.

It seems even more doubtful that Hua Kuo-feng would care to share his authority with someone of Teng Hsiao-ping's stature, a man not inclined to play secondary roles.

But all indications are that Teng Hsiao-ping's case is being re-examined, and it remains to be seen whether he needs to actually come to the foreground in order to exert his influence in matters.

Ready or not, here comes the L.I. Brezhnev personality cult

PARIS, Dec. 15 (AFP). — A powerful personality cult is springing up as the Soviet Union is preparing to celebrate the 70th birthday on Sunday of Leonid Brezhnev, the third leader to reach this age while still in the Kremlin after Stalin (Dec. 1949) and Khrushchev (April 1964).

As the great day, Dec. 19, approaches, there is a mounting wave of praise for Mr. Brezhnev, not only in the Soviet press but also in East Europe. Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria have awarded Mr. Brezhnev their highest state decorations.

The Bulgarian leader, in presenting the award in Moscow, compared Mr. Brezhnev to Lenin -- an extraordinary honour only previously given to Stalin at the very height of his personality cult.

This went much further than the Soviet press, which described Mr. Brezhnev as "the faithful son of the working class and party."

This whole birthday ritual can only be understood if we compare similar celebrations held for Stalin and Khrushchev.

The Soviet leaders who showered praise on Stalin and Khrushchev were the very same as those who were later to denounce their errors and succeed them.

In 1949, Stalin's 70th birthday was greeted with delirious enthusiasm. Mao Tse-tung and the Italian Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti joined East European Communist leaders at a ceremony where the generalissimo was awarded the Order of Lenin.

The Communist Party newspaper Pravda started a special section to publish flattering messages to Stalin which ran for three months after his birthday. In Moscow, a great effigy of Stalin was suspended 300 metres above the Red Square from a balloon.

Stalin's most senior colleagues -- like Malenkov, Molotov and Beria -- signed long flattering statements to Pravda. One interesting contribution was signed by Nikita Khrushchev and talked about "the greatest merit of Comrade Stalin was that he defended, in a bitter fight against the enemies of the people -- Mensheviks, social revolutionaries, Trotskyists, bourgeois nationalists -- the steel-like cohesion and unity of our party ranks."

Six years later, at the 20th Soviet party congress, Khrushchev denounced Stalin in his secret report for a variety of crimes, including the wrongful execution of people unjustly condemned as Mensheviks, social revolutionaries, Trotskyists.

Celebrations held for Khrushchev's 70th birthday could not be compared with those held for Stalin. Some of his moves, like cutting expenditure on the armed forces and heavy industry, had earned him many powerful enemies, and he was unpopular with many party "apparatchiki" who opposed destalinisation purges.

But Khrushchev ritual was adhered to and Khrushchev was awarded his Order of Lenin, the title Hero of the Soviet Union and several East European decorations.

The official birthday address was given by Leonid Brezhnev, at that time Soviet president. He expressed his "joy and emotion" and hoped that Khrushchev would "continue with as much dynamic energy to serve the cause of Lenin and bring off new victories."

At the end of his speech, Brezhnev gave Khrushchev a triple hug.

Less than six months later, Khrushchev was dismissed from power and Brezhnev was the principal beneficiary. For a time, the Soviet Union was ruled by a "troika" of President Nikolai Podgorniy, Premier Alexei Kosygin and party leader Brezhnev until the latter gained supremacy over the other.

Should one conclude that amongst those who praise Brezhnev today we will find those who tomorrow will be his main accusers? It is difficult to say. Under Stalin, no leader was safe. Under Khrushchev, it was not a man's life that was in danger, but his job.

Brezhnev has opted for stability, refusing to back any particular faction, and has remained as steady as a rock, although this has led to a certain lack of change in the leadership.

Observers generally believe that Brezhnev, if he retired now, would be the first Soviet leader since Lenin not to follow Stalin and Khrushchev through a trap door of history of which only the Soviet Union possesses the secret.

RADIO JORDAN

(On 856 KHZ)	15:00 Concert hour
7:00 Breakfast show	16:00 Old favourites
7:30 News bulletin	16:30 Easy listening
7:40 Morning melodies	17:00 Special feature
8:00 Sign off	17:30 Pop session part III
12:00 Pop session part I	18:00 News summary
13:00 News summary	18:05 Pop session part IV
13:05 Pop session part II	18:30 Pop music USA (rep)
14:00 News bulletin	19:00 News bulletin
14:15 Radio magazine	19:10 Music
14:30 Comedy	19:30 Sign off

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Tariq Kayyali (30273)	Fawzi (25024)
Fayez Jalouka (51012)	
Irbid :	Haditha
Mazhar Halabi	Zarqa :
Met'eb Khalaf	Mataiqa
	Al Shaab
Zarqa :	
Ghazi Roussan	
Pharmacies :	
Amman :	Rainbow (37249)
Nassar (22791)	Talal (25021)
Amin (39735)	Asfour (23231)
	Ahli (21127)

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8:40 Cairo (EA)	8:30 Jeddah
9:30 Rome	8:30 Bangkok, Bahrain
10:00 Beirut	8:40 Dhahran, Kuwait
10:00 Athens, Madrid, Casablanca	8:50 Baghdad
10:30 Kuwait (KAC)	9:40 Kuwait (KAC)
12:10 London (BA)	11:25 Rawalpindi (BA)
12:30 Paris	13:15 Beirut
14:15 Cairo	17:10 London
19:00 Abu Dhabi, Dhahran (SDI)	17:40 Copenhagen, Vienna
	18:15 Rome
	18:55 Amsterdam, Athens (KLM)
	20:26 Riyadh (SDI)
	21:15 Cairo

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Goethe Institute ...	" 41993
Soviet Cultural Centre ...	" 44203
Amman Municipal Library ...	" 36111

BBC RADIO

GMT	
05:00 News; 24 hours	13:45 Radio Theatre
05:30 Composer of the week	14:30 Matthew on Music
05:45 The World Today	15:00 Radio Newsreel
06:00 News; Press Review	15:15 Outlook
06:30 Baker's Half-Dozen	16:00 News; Commentary
07:00 News; 24 hours	16:15 Contemporary Music
07:30 Composer of the week	16:45 The World Today
07:45 Wars that changed the World	17:00 News
08:00 News	17:09 People and Politics
08:15 The Sound of ...	17:25 Music from Ireland
08:30 Farming World	17:40 Book Choice
09:00 News; UK Press Review	17:45 Sports Round-up
09:15 The World Today	18:00 News; Radio Newsreel
09:30 Financial News	18:30 Baker's Half-Dozen
09:45 Music Now	19:00 News; Outlook
10:15 Wales '76	19:42 Stock Market
10:30 Your Verdict	19:45 Beat is Black
11:00 News	20:00 World News; 24 hours
11:15 Biology of a lifetime	20:30 A Jolly Good Show
11:30 Reith Lecture	21:15 People and Politics
12:00 Radio Newsreel	21:30 Featuring ...
12:15 Top Twenty	21:45 Paperbacks
12:45 Sports Round-up	22:00 News; The World Today
13:00 News; 24 hours	22:25 Financial News
13:30 Paperbacks	22:35 Gilbert and Sullivan
	22:45 Sports Round-up
	23:00 News; Commentary

JORDAN TELEVISION

Channel 3 & 6	9.15 Quiz programme
6.00 Quran	10.00 Play
6.05 Cartoons	
6.30 On we go	Channel 6
7.00 Time to remember	7.30 News in Hebrew
8.00 News in Arabic	7.45 Varieties
	8.30 Bless this house
Channel 3	9.10 Invisible man
7.30 Science and life	10.00 News in English
8.30 Arabic series	10.15 Petrocelli



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Sino-Soviet talks stagger on again

HONG KONG (CSM). The latest Soviet overture to warm relations with China has reopened border talks for the first time in 18 months.

Indeed, a Soviet delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister and veteran border talks negotiator Leonid F. Ilyichev recently arrived in Peking for the talks to an apparently cordial welcome.

But the Chinese negotiators will be looking less for general statements of friendship from the talks, and more for concrete answers to at least three specific questions.

They are:

- Whether the Soviets are willing to begin a reduction of the force of 40 divisions that they station along the northern Chinese border. The Chinese long have insisted that Soviet proposals for mutual non aggression pact are useless without a reduction of forces along the Amur and Ussuri Rivers. Border clashes between the two countries erupted over disputes in the Ussuri River area in 1969.

Up to now the Soviets have been reluctant to discuss such withdrawals, according to diplomatic sources.

The importance China places on a reduction of Soviet troops was stressed indirectly by a New China News Agency commentary on the same day Mr. Ilyichev arrived in Peking.

Although the commentary was largely devoted to alleged Soviet military expansionism in Europe, it pointedly added: "It is known by all that the Soviet Union has never reduced its forces by a single man or rifle."

What method should be used to settle the status of disputed segments of the border? Prior to 1974, the Soviets insisted that the border was defined by protocol agreements in the 1860 Treaty of Peking. But the Chinese denounced this as an "unequal treaty" and one imposed by force.

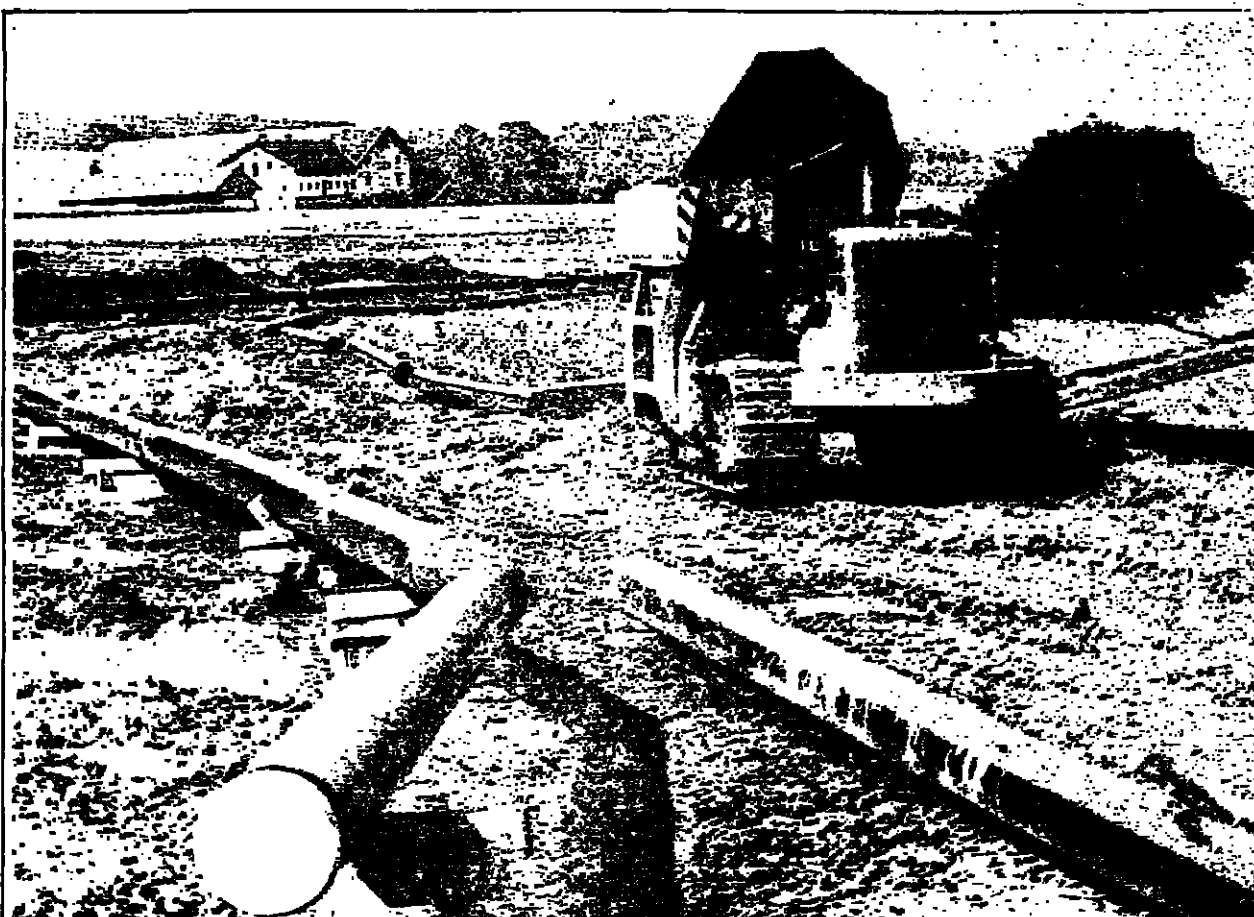
In late 1974 the Soviets indicated they might go at least part way towards the Chinese position, which argues that principles of international law governing "shared rivers" should be used to solve the Ussuri River issue. (Under this rule the boundary would run along the mainstream or central line of the river rather than along river banks, as in the 1860 treaty.)

Is the Soviet Union willing to tone down its policy of what the Chinese see as "encirclement" through naval and political expansion in South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific?

While Mr. Ilyichev was arriving in Peking, Western diplomatic sources reported that Soviet journalist Victor Louis was on a mission to Taiwan. Mr. Louis, who has often acted as a semi-official representative for the Soviet government, drew sharp Chinese condemnation when he visited Taiwan at the height of the Chinese-Soviet border dispute in 1969.

That visit sparked speculation that the Soviet Union was "flirting" with the Chinese Nationalist government either to seek a new Asian ally or to make the Communist Chinese government more cooperative by (in effect) threatening to support Gen. Chiang Kai-shek on Taiwan.

If Mr. Louis does visit Taiwan, the Soviet Union could again be seen by Peking as threatening to intervene in the still-unfinished Chinese civil war.



EUROPE'S LARGEST -- This natural gas holder, costing roughly 100 million deutsche marks and under construction at Bierwang, Upper Bavaria, forms part of the plan to safeguard West German fuel and power supplies. Pipelines have now been laid to store 3,000 million cubic metres of natural gas. Bierwang will house storage facilities for natural gas from the Chiemgau area of Upper Bavaria. Bavarian gas will later be joined by natural gas from the Soviet Union, which is already pumped by pipeline via Czechoslovakia.

Japan faces uncertainty after elections

TOKYO (CSM). — Japan's voters have spoken, and the most likely result is a period of political confusion that ends 21 years of conservative one-party rule -- without any clearly defined alternative to take its place.

The Liberal Democrats (LDP), buffeted by the Lockheed scandal, have retained an overall majority in the House of Representatives only by hastily admitting eight successful independent candidates in the recent general election. They captured 257 seats in the 511-seat house: 256 makes a majority.

Prime Minister Takeo Miki will have to take responsibility for his party's unprecedentedly poor showing as the time approaches for the party to elect a new leader in a week's time. But it is by no means certain that his major rival, former Deputy Premier Takeo Fukuda, will be elected to succeed him.

Mr. Miki told a news conference after the election that as president of the party, he accepted full responsibility for the poor LDP showing. But, he said, the party's major task now is to work out an appropriate response to the will of the voters by reforming its structure and purging itself of its faults.

The news conference was taken as an indication that Mr. Miki would not give up his party post and the prime ministership that goes with it without a struggle.

It left open the question of what approach the LDP would make to the youthful Yohsei Kono and his New Liberal Club (NLC), formed by six rebels from the Liberal Democrats. The NLC won 17 seats outright and can claim another two from candidates it supported without formal endorsement.

Having campaigned against corruption and money politics in the Liberal Democratic Party, as typified by the Lockheed scandal, the NLC cannot agree to cooperate with the Liberal Democrats unless it obtains conditions sufficient to preserve its own image as a fresh, youthful, open, forward-looking political group. It could well refuse to join a coalition unless other moderate opposition parties do likewise.

The opposition parties are not numerically strong enough to form a new government by themselves, even if all groups from the NLC to the Communists agreed to cooperate.

The Socialists, the biggest opposition party, won 122 seats, four more than in the 1972 election. But some of their most senior figures, both leftist and moderate, were defeated.

The Communists have been replaced as the second biggest opposition party by the Komeito, also known as the Clean Government Party, whose support comes from the militant Buddhist sect known as Soka Gakkai.

Communist seats in the House of Representatives fell from 38 in the 1972 election to a scant 17. But in terms of the popular vote, the Communists registered only a slight drop from 10.49 per cent in 1972 to 10.38 per cent. Many of their unsuccessful candidates are borderline cases. A tiny shift in voter preferences could once again increase Communist seats dramatically.

The Komeito increased its popular vote from 8.46 per cent in 1972 to almost 11 per cent this time. Its strength rose spectacularly from 29 seats in 1972 to 55.

Of 21 independents elected, 12 are Liberal Democrats who ran without the party label only because they were unable to obtain formal endorsement. Two, former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka and Tomisaburo Hashimoto, had to leave the party because they had been formally charged with accepting bribes from Lockheed. Another is close to the Komeito. Two are genuine independents.

If Mr. Tanaka, Mr. Hashimoto

and the 12 Liberal Democrats who ran as independents are all counted in the LDP column -- as eight of them already are -- the party will be able to muster 263 votes in the House. Although a majority, this is not enough for the party to avoid yielding at least some choice committee chairmanships to the opposition parties.

The newly elected House of Representatives will be convened in special session on Christmas day to elect a new prime minister, as the constitution requires. The LDP will be able to keep the prime ministership if it remains united. Any emulation of Mr. Kon-

o's withdrawal from the LDP last year, any new split in LDP ranks, would throw the numerical advantage to the opposition.

The coming months will be a period of navigation through uncharted seas as the various parties jockey for position and power. Meanwhile, elections for the House of Councillors (upper house) must be held in July, and Japan's faltering economy will require a strong hand at the helm. Few observers can predict with confidence how long it will take for fresher, younger leadership to emerge and prime ministership if it remains a new domestic balance of power to be achieved.

Hard-line attitudes reappear in East Germany after expulsion of poet-singer Wolf Biermann

BONN (CSM). — Repercussions from East Germany's recent action in depriving poet-singer Wolf Biermann of his citizenship could weaken the position of East German Communist Party leader and head of state Erich Honecker.

Experienced analysts in the West think the exiling of Mr. Biermann, whose citizenship was taken from him while he was on a concert tour of West Germany, was prompted by hard-liners within the East German Politburo. These men, led by security chief Paul Verner and propaganda head Werner Lamberz, have long been critical of Mr. Honecker's relatively liberal course.

They may be hoping to unseat Mr. Honecker with the support of hard-liners in Moscow and to usher in a cultural, political and economic freeze in East Germany, these analysts say. Unwittingly the East Germans themselves have helped spread news of the Biermann case.

On two successive days Neues Deutschland, organ of the East German Socialist Unity (Communist) Party, devoted three-and-a-half of its large-format pages to comments from more than 230 writers, academicians, workers, musicians, dancers and others expressing disapproval of the poet.

The onslaught in Neues Deutschland, a newspaper read throughout the East European bloc, came in response to a protest against the exiling of Mr. Biermann signed by more than 30 East German intellectuals.

In reading the fine print of the comments in the party organ, one finds many nuances. Most of the celebrities quoted were apparently coaxed into condemning Mr. Biermann.

Britain attempts to tone down terms for IMF loan

LONDON (CSM). — This promises to be a make-or-break month for the British Labour government in its effort to negotiate its requested \$3.9 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This sum is deemed necessary to keep some might argue, is not a case of Britain going until it can begin robbing Peter to pay Paul the uphill climb to pay its own way.

The problem for Prime Minister James Callaghan is to come up with a programme of belt-tightening convincing enough to get the IMF to agree to the loan without as the IMF's minimum producing in turn such a squeeze on British workers that they renounce their "social contract" with the government to keep wage increases within agreed limits.

If recent British press reports are correct, signs point to the IMF going along with British cabinet Secretary Shirley Williams' proposals for less drastic cuts in the prime minister's economic and government spending than the fund financial adviser, Harold Lever, was said initially to require.

But the implication of a story in the London Sunday Times was that in compensation, the IMF was asking for a British commitment on limiting public spending beyond the year ahead. This still could cause the British cabinet to balk.

The IMF has been tightlipped ever since it sent a team to Britain over a month ago to discuss terms for the loan. British press reports indicate that the IMF wanted to cut up to £3 billion in public spending for the year ahead. The London Sunday Observer said recently that the Callaghan government was prepared to go as far as £2 billion towards the figure -- and no farther.

One of the questions about the proposed British package is whether it will be accepted as genuine enough by the IMF and not as an effort in cosmetics. Part of the package (again according to British press reports) would be a

But the centrists fear the effect of the deflation (particularly in the form of a politically dangerous increase in unemployment) which they believe full compliance with the IMF's original conditions would bring.

In the end the centrists reportedly won the day -- and the prime minister's support. Theirs are the terms the cabinet now looks to the IMF to accept. But even if acceptance is forthcoming and the loan is made, Britain still will have to prove by its actions rather than promises that it can begin to pay its way and that the pound is worth acquiring and holding.

See latest development p. 6

dered -- in other East European capitals.

Meanwhile, in the West the "independent" French and Italian Communist parties have come out with long articles criticising the brusque way in which East Berlin handled the Biermann case. Invoking the June's conference of 26 European parties, both the French party organ L'Humanite and the Italian L'Unita urged the East German authorities to reconsider their action.

So far there is no sign of East Germans yielding. In recent days they have placed another dissenting physicist, Rolf Havemann, under house arrest. And Reiner Kunze, one of East Germany's most popular writers, has been expelled from the Writers' Union.

All this will be read -- and pondered -- in other East European capitals.

...But he's still a dedicated socialist

HAMBURG (DaD). — Several thousand young people recently packed a Cologne concert starring East Berlin poet Wolf Biermann, a communist ballad singer whose outspoken criticism of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) regime has led to a ban on public performances in his own country since 1965. Hours later he was still of GDR nationality and refused permission to return to his home family in East Berlin.

Biermann, 40, is the son of a Hamburg dockworker who died in Auschwitz. He migrated to the GDR in 1953 aged 17. His mother, still a convinced communist, lives in Hamburg. His 22-year-old wife, mother of their baby boy is still in East Berlin, where Biermann studied economics and philosophy and became an assistant director at Berliner Ensemble, run by Brecht's widow, Helene Weigel.

His poems encountered official criticism. He was expelled from the Socialist Unity Party in 1963 and banned from performing in public. Yet he continued to write and sing in his book-lined repertoire with eight guitars, a piano and a harmonium. Typescripts, tape recordings of his work circulate widely, if surreptitiously, the GDR.

Wolf Biermann is a communist critic of so-called socialist countries. He is scathing in his criticism of officialdom and the police yet chose to remain in the GDR. He refused offers of a passport to the West, commenting in spring 1975 that it would be the "great misfortune if I were to be expelled to a Western society." With memories of the Czech thaw receding into the past Biermann now hopes socialism he would like to see will be implemented in Italy.

Biermann, whose Cologne concert was televised for four hours, stated his case in song. He would sooner live in a bureaucratic (the GDR) than in a bourgeois open-air theatre.



Wolf Biermann: Exiled from East Germany for being a dedicated communist.

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SWEARING-IN -- Mr. Helmut Schmidt is sworn in as the new West German Chancellor during the Bundestag session in Bonn Wednesday afternoon. (AP wirephoto).

Bundestag re-elects Schmidt to new 4-year term -- on a frail basis of support

BONN, Dec. 15 (R). — Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was sworn in as head of the West German government today after being re-elected by the lower house of parliament to a new four-year term.

He was re-elected in a secret ballot by a narrow majority, underlining the frail basis of his liberal coalition.

Within the first two hours, Herr Schmidt was in the middle of his first cabinet crisis. Herr Walter Arendt, who holds the important portfolio of minister for labour and social affairs, decided to quit the 16-man cabinet even before it formally resumed office tomorrow.

The 51-year-old former miners' trade union leader has been the target of opposition attacks over the alleged squandering of pension funds and a plan to defer a promised increase.

In the earlier secret ballot for the post of chancellor, he obtained only a bare majority. Of the 496 deputies with a vote in the Bundestag (lower house of parliament), 250 voted for him.

Herr Schmidt needed at least 249 votes -- one more than half the full strength of the house.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) has 214 deputies plus the 39 liberals in the Free Democratic Party (FDP), giving him a potential maximum of 253. But he fell three below this.

One of his Social Democratic (SPD) deputies was absent through illness. There was one abstention and one spoiled ballot paper.

This was interpreted in political circles as a demonstrative gesture against Herr Schmidt by two of his own supporters, probably because of his stop-go handling of a promised pensions increase last week.

Bowing to trade union and public pressure last week, the new chancellor had to restore a 10 per cent pension increase which the government had planned to delay for economic reasons.

Later in the day, Herr Schmidt announced a reshuffle of his 15-strong cabinet which brought in three new faces.

The team preserves the 11-4 balance between Social Democrats excluding Mr. Schmidt himself, and the Free Democrats, but there are two women ministers, compared with one in the outgoing coalition.

The new Minister of Labour and Health, former union official Herbert Ehrenberg, 50, replaces Herr Arendt.

Marie Schlei, one of the two new women ministers, replaces Herr Egon Bahr at the Ministry of Economic Cooperation. Herr Bahr has gone to become a lead-

ing organiser of the Social Democrat Party.

The major tasks facing the chancellor now include unemployment, currently running at one million people, and inflation, although the rate is the lowest in Europe, at four per cent.

Coalition sources said that the chancellor would call in a speech tomorrow for financial aid to Britain and Italy and for social reforms involving housing, universities and the environment.

But his margin for rule is not a large one, and some observers are wondering whether Germany, which has been an island of economic and political stability in Europe, may not follow its neighbours down a path of political uncertainty.

The vote recalled the latest elections in Sweden, when the Social Democrat government of Prime Minister Olof Palme went down to defeat before a more conservative coalition, and the problems of the Dutch government under Premier Joop den Uyl.

The changes indicate the persistent nature of economic difficulties as well as a general shift to the right in several European nations -- and mean that Herr Schmidt will have to walk a fine line if he wants to continue to make social Democrat voices heard in Europe.

Karamanlis confers with Bhutto

RAWALPINDI, Dec. 15 (Agencies). — Greek Premier Constantine Karamanlis held formal talks with Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on the second day of his four-day visit to Pakistan here today.

Pakistani officials said the two leaders discussed the political and economic situations in their respective regions and Premier Bhutto's proposal for a Third World summit on international economic issues.

Last night Mr. Bhutto said he was confident that Greece and Turkey had the will and capacity to settle their disputes.

Speaking at a banquet he gave for the visiting Greek prime minister, Mr. Bhutto said harmonisation of Greek-Turkish interests would add greatly to the strength of the eastern Mediterranean. He saw a common desire on both sides to achieve just honourable and peaceful settlement.

In his reply, Mr. Karamanlis made no reference to his country's differences with Turkey.

MADRID, Dec. 15 (R). — Spaniards voted today in a referendum expected to give overwhelming backing to government plans to dismantle the 40-year-old dictatorship of the late Gen. Franco.

About 80 per cent of Spanish voters had cast ballots in the referendum when polls closed in the evening, officials estimated.

One of the first to vote after the polls opened was King Juan Carlos. His government is seeking approval of a bill to abolish the largely appointed Cortes set up by the late Gen. Franco and replace it with a two-chamber parliament elected by universal suffrage. Another early voter was Gen. Franco's widow.

Despite the Communist and Socialist Parties' boycott call, and despite relatively low turnouts in the Basque and Catalan regions where there are separatist movements, the nation-wide turnout averaged about 70 per cent of registered voters one hour before voting ended, officials affirmed.

The government was confident that the people would ratify the reform, but was worried that a high percentage of abstentions might tend to discredit the reforms.

During the afternoon the Information Ministry predicted that 85 per cent would vote and only one-tenth of them vote "no". That forecast seemed slightly over-optimistic at the close of voting, observers said.

In the northern Basque country, home of the nationalist guerrilla group ETA, police defused a bomb tied to a Basque flag at a polling station in Bilbao.

In Pamplona, police detonated a bomb attached to a placard saying "Abstain, there is no freedom," and baton-charged pickets trying to force shops to close during a strike called by leftist groups.

The strike call was largely ignored, however, and at midday all large firms and ports in the region were working as normal.

Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez, who made a last-minute appeal on

television last night for the people to vote "yes", told reporters after casting his ballot: "I do not know if I give the country confidence but the country certainly gives me confidence." He forgot to bring his national identity card -- a requirement for voting -- but produced another acceptable document.

In his televised speech, Senor Suarez said the government would not allow either leftwing terrorism or a rightwing backlash to influence Spain's democratic evolution.

Schools were shut, with many of them used as polling stations, and factories and offices gave workers four hours off to vote.

In working-class areas, poll supervisors automatically give the voter a certificate proving that he or she has voted which must be given to the employer if the worker's pay is not to be docked.

While the certificate in theory enables the authorities to check if workers have fulfilled their legal duty to vote, the government at no time in the referendum campaign suggested that it would use the power heavily to fine people who abstain.

There are nearly 22 million eligible voters in Spain's third referendum since the 1936-39 civil war.

In central Madrid, blue-shirted young militants of the extreme rightwing party New Force distributed leaflets calling on people to vote "no" despite an official ban on propaganda after midnight last night.

People crowded around electoral lists, some of which were defaced by rightwing appeals to reject the reforms "out of loyalty to Franco." The list at one station was burnt during the night.

In Barcelona, capital of fiercely nationalistic Catalonia, some polling stations reported they had run out of "yes" ballot papers a few hours after voting started.

The vote, held under cloudy skies which symbolised the uncertainties of the future, took place as Maoist guerrillas held a leading

political adviser as hostage in exchange for the release of 15 jailed leftists.

Senor Antonio Maria de Oriol y Urquijo, President of Spain's advisory Council of State, was abducted from his office here last Saturday.

The kidnappers today sent the Madrid newspaper Informaciones a message believed to contain a death threat.

The kidnappers, claiming to represent the extreme leftwing GRAPO movement, had already warned the government that unless 15 political prisoners were released soon they would be forced to "do something we don't want to do."

Today's message, attached to a stone hurled into the newspaper offices, was the fifth since Saturday's kidnapping. The police did not say what it contained, but the kidnappers are understood to have said Mr. Oriol, 63, will be killed unless their demands are met by midnight Friday.

Vietnam meet told housing tops Hanoi's woes

HONG KONG, Dec. 15 (AFP). — A representative of the army pledged full support for the Vietnam Workers' (Communist) Party on the second day of its fourth congress in Hanoi today, the Voice of Vietnam radio announced.

Addressing the congress this morning Gen. Tran Quang Hung vowed that the army will remain united around the party's Central Committee.

The radio said that Hanoi's representative, Mr. Nguyen Nam, told the congress that difficulties arising out of the war were being overcome slowly but that many problems remained to be solved. The most pressing problem in Hanoi was housing.

Recalling that American B-52 had carpet-bombed Hanoi, Mr. Nam said that houses, hospitals and schools, had been destroyed and had to be rebuilt. Many new buildings had been constructed in recent years but they could not meet the housing demand caused by the destruction of houses during the war and by the need to replace those which were too old to be habitable.

Mr. Nam said production in Hanoi's light industries had surpassed the level recorded during the war and new products had been produced for export.

He hailed the party's decision to make Hanoi the economic, political and cultural centre of Vietnam.

Mugabe, Nkomo accuse U.K. of trying to set up black puppet regime in Rhodesia

GENEVA, Dec. 15 (Agencies). — Rhodesian nationalist leaders Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo today accused Britain and the United States of trying to establish a black puppet government in Rhodesia.

The two men who have formed Patriotic Front alliance, said in a statement that Anglo-American settlement plans, accepted by Rhodesian Premier Ian Smith, were "designed to hoodwink the people of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) into accepting a puppet regime for their independence."

"It is tragic that some so-called nationalist leaders are falling for this dangling imperialist carrot," they said.

Mr. Mugabe and Mr. Nkomo spoke at a news conference shortly before leaving Geneva where the British-sponsored Rhodesia conference was adjourned yesterday until Jan. 17.

Mr. Mugabe and Mr. Nkomo said the adjournment was due to "the failure of the British government and its protegee, the Rhodesian racist regime, to come out with any concrete proposals for a transitional government."

From London it was reported later that Mr. Ivor Richard, the Geneva conference chairman, was optimistic about the conference's progress on his return there today from Geneva. But he told waiting newsmen: "We must try to bridge the gap and get over the suspicion and start trusting one another." Mr. Richard is due to leave on the first stage of Southern African tour on Dec. 28, informed sources in London said.

He went on: "I am pleased that we have got over the first stage of examining each others' views. The next stage is for us to put over ideas of our own and I hope my tour of South Africa will enable Britain to do this."

WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

● **BAHRAIN**, Dec. 15 (R). — Bahrain's Prime Minister, Sheikh Khalifa Ibn Salman Al Khalifa, today opened the headquarters here of the Gulf International Bank, jointly owned by the seven Arab states bordering the Gulf. The bank, whose creation was announced in January, has a capital fixed at 40 million Bahraini dinars. Officials said the bank would establish a global branch network. Founding members of the new bank are Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Qatar and Oman.

● **LONDON**, Dec. 15 (AFP). — Polish Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz arrived here today for a two-day official visit, the first by a Polish premier to Britain since World War II. He was accompanied by Foreign Trade Minister Jerzy Olszewski. The two countries were expected to sign a five-year economic cooperation agreement. The visit follows a visit by British Prime Minister James Callaghan to Warsaw in July 1975 at the end of which a communique was published recommending "deep political consultations" between Britain and Poland "on international questions of mutual interest and on matters affecting their bilateral relations."

● **PARIS**, Dec. 15 (AFP). — Paris Metro traffic was seriously disrupted again today on the second day of a 48-hour strike by electricity and gas workers. Trains came to a halt on several lines, and Paris suburban rail services were hit in some areas.

● **CAIRO**, Dec. 15 (AFP). — Four tombs dating back to the Greco-Roman era were discovered in the village of Al Shath, east of Kom-ombo, in upper Egypt. The tombs contained forty stuffed crocodiles representing the divinity of the "Sebeles" period and hawks symbolizing the god Horus. In addition, 35 other tombs were discovered. They contained sarcophagi, pottery and the mummies of three children.

● **MAFEKING**, South Africa, Dec. 15 (AFP). — Bophutatswana, the second of South Africa's nine tribal homelands to choose independence, will build a new capital near here to be called Mabatho, an official communique said today. The communique issued by the Bophutatswana cabinet said the homeland's leader, chief Lucas Mangope, had decided against naming Mafeking the capital because "it is just another small white town". It is reliably understood that the South African government has given the homeland \$115 million to start work on the new capital. Bophutatswana is hoping to become independent a year from now.

Spaniards expected to vote for an end to the Francoist era



ROYAL VOTE -- King Juan Carlos of Spain and Queen Sofia at the national referendum at El Pardo, a village near Madrid, Wednesday as Queen Sofia waits for her husband to vote.

Healey slashes public spending by £2.5b.

LONDON, Dec. 15 (Agencies). — The immediate reaction to the announcement that the government was to make major cutbacks in public spending in the coming year was too weak. Starting in public exchange for a period of two years in exchange for a \$3,900 million credit from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) payable over two years, Denis Healey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced today.

Mr. Healey told the House of Commons that in addition to the IMF loan, the U.S. Treasury and the West German Central Bank had agreed to bolster Britain's monetary reserves by granting it standby credits of respectively \$500 and \$300 million.

Unveiling the government's "mini-budget", the chancellor said the government had undertaken to reduce the planned budget deficit by £1,500 million in financial 1977/78 and by another £2,000 million in financial 1978/79. He said the outbacks would be achieved by slashing public spending by £1,000 million next year and by £1,500 million in 1978/79. Defence, housing and education were areas badly hit.

In addition, the government would sell off part of its shares in British Petroleum, reducing its stake from 68 to 51 per cent. City experts said this would fetch at least \$500 million towards financing the budget deficit.

Mr. Jack Jones, leader of the powerful Transport and General Workers' Union, said he thought the government's approach would ensure survival of its social contract.

But in the House of Commons Mr. Healey was received with shouts of resign both from the Conservative opposition benches and leftwingers in his own party.

LONDON MARKET REPORT

The market closed easier Wednesday after a quiet session ahead of the mini budget, dealers said. At 15:00 the F.T. index was down 2.4 at 321.9.

Government stocks maintained early gains of 1/8 in longs after yesterday's mark down on the trade figures while shorts were narrowly mixed. Leading industrials were mixed to easier with sentiment also affected by the miners' vote for industrial action if early retirement talks fail.

Oils were mostly steady, but B.P. lost a net 5p after 7p while banks were little changed.

Leading industrials higher by up to 4p at the close included ICI, Glaxo, GEC, Hawker, Tubes, GKN and Beecham while similar falls were seen in Courtauld, Marks, Bowater, Fisons, BAT, EMI and Dunlop. Unilever was steady after moving narrowly, and Guinness gained a net penny on further consideration of yesterday's results, dealers said.

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